



Dayton Bluffs First Year Report

It's been a great first year of work at the Dayton Bluffs Preserve in Ottawa!

An amazing amount of work was completed on restoration of the woodlands and former farm fields, and general clean-up of the property. And, a few nice amenities were also added so people can now access and enjoy the preserve.



Here is a quick overview from the beginning:

- July 2013: Purchase of the property for approx. \$2 million
- Fall 2013: Fund raiser held by local businessman Jerry Halterman
Held two site vision planning sessions with city officials and local stakeholders
- Winter 2013/14 Started woodland restoration activities
Held volunteer work days and public tours/open houses
- Spring 2014 Continued volunteer work days and public tours/open houses
Held field trips for local groups and opened site for Morel Fest
"Welcome to Ottawa" party hosted by Tom Heimsoth and Heritage Harbor Resort
- Summer 2014 City of Ottawa approved annexation and lease agreements
Planted 70 acres of farm fields into prairie
Continued volunteer work days
Held FairmountSantrol work day with more than 500 employees
- Fall 2014 Continued volunteer work days
Successfully obtained 3 to 1 challenge grant from Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, raising more than \$31,000 total for restoration



First Year Site Accomplishments

- Restored 40 acres of woodlands and planted 70 acres to prairie
- Cleared 2 miles of woodland edge to open it up
- Removed 2 tons of trash from ravines
- Added the following new amenities- 6 picnic tables, a tool shed, 100 loppers, small bridge over creek, entrance road and parking area
- Cleaned up the old pioneer cemetery at north end of property (FairmountSantrol volunteers)



Volunteers and Public Support

- Pizzo & Associates adopted a 15 acre oak woodland for restoration valued at \$15,000
- A “friends” group has been informally established to help with restoration and other cleanup activities tallying 130 hours
- Approx. \$5,000 of additional in kind services provided by area companies and professionals
- FairmountSantról volunteer work day produced 2,000 hours of volunteer work values at \$27,000
- Nice article in *Starved Rock Country* magazine and coverage in several local media outlets



Funding

- Initial acquisition funding provided by Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation and the Hamill Family Foundation- approx. \$2 million
- \$175,000 has been raised in donations, grants and pledges so far for restoration activity
- Approx. \$95,000 has been spent on restoration and related activity

What Next on the Agenda?

- Final grading and seeding/planting along entrance road and parking area
- Complete final seeding on remaining farm fields
- Continue woodland restoration (clearing brush and small trees)
- Stabilize at least two ravine heads from erosion
- Seed around new bridge area
- Clear brush and open up the Indian mounds area
- Remove black locust grove
- Burn woodland areas weather permitting
- Continue volunteer work days and open houses/tours
- Install entrance sign
- Site master plan in cooperation with City of Ottawa

A Big Thank You to our Friends and Partners!

- Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation
- Grand Victoria Foundation
- Hamill Family Foundation
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- City of Ottawa, especially Mayor Bob Eschbach and councilmen Dan Aussem and James Less
- Jack Pizzo & Associates
- Christopher B. Burke Engineering
- Bedrock Earthscapes
- Operating Engineers Local 150
- Illinois Valley Contractors Association
- Ruiz Construction
- Etscheid, Duttlinger & Associates, Inc.
- Grand Rapids Excavating
- Universal Paving & Excavating
- D Construction
- FairmountSantról/Wedron Silica
- Jerry Halterman and Dan Reynolds
- Tom Heimsoth and Heritage Harbor
- Ottawa Visitors Center and Julie Johnson
- Paul Barrett and the LaSalle County Master Naturalists
- Marcia Nelson, great neighbor and friend
- *Starved Rock Country* magazine
- All of our wonderful volunteers and donors